San Leandro Computer Club JOURNAL

September, 1993

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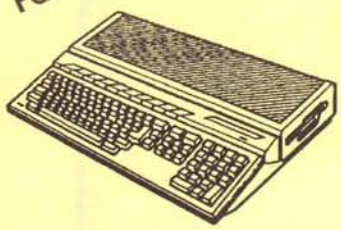

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Steve Goldstein (408) 257-2058
8-Bit Editor:
Bob Woolley 865-1672

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P.O. Box 1506
San Lendro, CA 94577-0374

An independent, non-profit organization of Atari microcomputer users. Membership provides access to the club print and magnetic libraries, subscription to the Journal and participation in club activities. A membership application may appear elsewhere in this issue .

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September • 1993

FEATURES

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Pounding on the 8-Bits

Buy your own / Share what you know / 8 bits are plenty

September 1993

Well, I guess it's time to jump into some other project. The IDE drive works OK and I need something new to wrack my brain..... How about some display projects? I have done some improve-your-video things in the past but they rely on you having a nice monitor in the first place. How about doing some mods for the monitors available now?

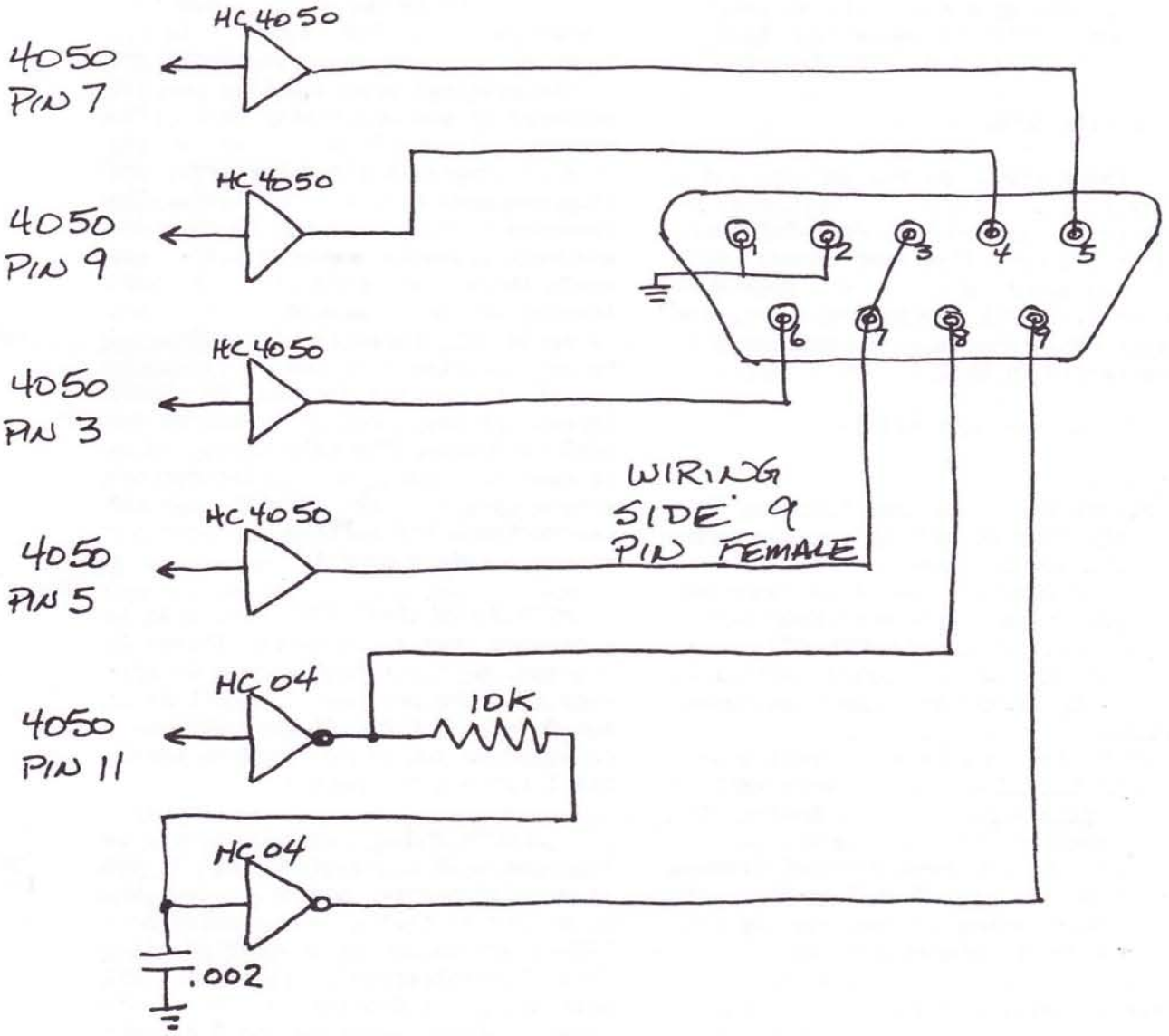
When the computer world was dominated by Apples, Commies and Ataris, the monitor manufacturers built truckloads of composite, 15khz units that worked very well on our machines. Monochrome or color, we had a wide variety to choose from. Now, of course, there is zilch..... If it weren't for televisions with video inputs, we would be out of luck! For games and such, get yourself a good 27 inch TV with monitor inputs and have a good time. You can even get S-VHS on the larger sets (looks great!). But, if you do a lot of text work, you need a smaller and sharper display. Since Apple, Atari and Commodore no longer sell 8-bits, you will find that the vast majority of good monitors are designed for IBM PCs in one form or another. This is what we have to work with, so let's break them down into two categories, color and monochrome.

The limiting factor in color quality is the dot pitch or the distance between each viewable dot. Unlike monochrome units, where the face of the screen is one continuous surface, color screens are divided into tiny triads. These structures contain a separate pixel of each of the three primary colors, Red, Blue and Green. The size of theses triads limits how small a detail you can display on any color screen. For example, on our Ataris, we can generate a display in GR.8 that is 320 pixels wide. Those pixels are so small that they don't cover all three color dots in a triad. You must plot two pixels together horizontally so that they cover the triad or the true color will not be displayed. Take a look at the Atari character set - all vertical strokes are at least two pixels wide. If they weren't, you would have things like H's with colored sides (this is where artifacting comes from). Plot alternate pixels in GR.8 and you get colors that you did not select (try it). The result is that a color monitor needs very small triads (called dot pitch) in order to display fine details. Currently we can only get these high resolution displays in IBM VGA units that operate at twice our Atari Speed, 31khz. Maybe we'll work on that later..... For now, lets look at the 15khz displays that all IBMs used, the CGA monitor. This month we will make up a circuit to connect a CGA screen to an 8-bit. The CGA monitors are digital input so we will get some strange looking colors, but they will be very sharp! A major advantage to using a CGA monitor is that the XEP80 can also be modified to run on a CGA display. This will allow you to run both your 40 and 80 column displays on a single monitor.

The best display is available on a monochrome screen, of course. There is no dot pitch limit at all on a black and white (or green, or amber) monitor. Only problem is that you can't find good, composite input units anywhere. Even if you do get a mono monitor in good shape, it will not necessarily have the really high bandwidth you would like. For really good units, you are limited to either TTL (digital) 15khz or analog 31khz VGA devices. Neither of them work on an unmodified Atari. So, let's get to modifying.....

If you add this circuit to your 8-bit, you will be able to plug in either a monochrome TTL or color CGA IBM monitor. Each has limitations - the mono screen only shows 4 levels of gray (you lose some pieces of your picture) - the color screen shows intensity levels as different colors all at the same intensity. Neither shows the color information sent by the Atari. But, it's a pretty easy hack, so try it out. Mount the components on a small perfboard next to the 4050 in your computer (all models of 8-bit use the same luminance circuitry, so they all have a 4050). Mount the 9 pin socket on the case in a convenient location and you're ready to go.

More next month!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SIDE 9
PIN FEMALE

OUR 8-BIT DISKS

by Bob Scholar SLCC 8-bit Software Chairman

SLCC1109
SEPTEMBER 1993

General Comments

The August ATARI CLASSICS is now in the mail, via 2nd class. It should be delivered before 9/31. Notices for renewal are also being mailed. All in all, it has gone very well so far!!!

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR DISK AND MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION!!

D.O.M. Summary

There are 2 MAJOR programs, and 2 "small" ones on this D.O.M. Most of the front is used by a Fast Solitaire game- the best I've ever seen!! Side "B" has about a third of a Data Base which lists ALL the magazine articles about 8-bit Ataris,- as published in the period of 8/92 to 9/91.

Contents - Disk #1109:

FRONT:-

- SLEUTH.BAS- is a Game like the TV's "Concentration" which uses icons instead of words.
- PSTR13.RVW is a text file about the most recent update of PRINTSTAR.
- Fast Solitaire (FASTSOL.BIN)- is a M/L version of Canfield with lots of Bells and Whistles,- as below.

BACK:-

- FILE 'EM- occupies the entire back of this disk. It is only part of a data base file. The entire file contains about 2100 entries. It will be published in installments over the next 2 or 3 months; with instructions for setting up your personal reference file.

Program Details

FASTSOL.BIN is the file to load for the Game of Fast Solitaire. SLCC disk No.16 (Vol.1, #6 for 8/83) has a BASIC version that looks similar- but what a difference! Both are Canfield Solitaire, but this one is in M/L, so it's about four times as fast! This version also has a very complete DOC, and it keeps statistics for a number of players. It's from John Dickerson of DACE (Diablo Valley A E). Douglas B. Fletcher programmed it. It plays with either J/S or Keyboard.

FILE 'EM by Norman Hill was published in ANALOG #18 (4/84). Darryl Howerton has made major modifications to the original program (it's now 177 sectors- it was originally 36!). The program sets up 8 categories for the type of program/article indexed, and each one goes into a 'sub-file'. The language used in each one is recorded and each entry is assigned 1 or 2 key words (from a standard list) to make finding easier. There is an excellent (6 page) DOC, formatted for [C]opying to your printer from DOS. It tells you how to use the program, in simple terms. It has about 2100 records for 8/92 to 9/91. The Data files add up to over 1200 sectors- too big for one single density disk. I will publish instructions for setting up your own personal reference file.

PSTR13.RVW (PRINTSTAR Ver. 1.3) is excerpted from a review by Thomas J. Andrews, of the latest update to this fine printing program. It will be on our October D.O.M. (I had originally intended to put it on for this month, but I ran out of space.)

SLEUTH.BAS by Heath Lawrence, is from the 6/88 issue of ANTIC. It has faces, telephones, musical notes, and other icons that kids can match on a 342-square memory game modeled after TV's "Concentration". It works well with all Atari 8-bits;- of any memory size; disk or cassette. For 2 players with either 1 or 2 Joysticks, who try to match 10 pairs of little pictures. It's (obviously) best for pre-school children, but it can be fun for older ones too (or even adults?).

PRINT STAR (ver. 1.3) REVIEW

by Thomas J. Andrews

PRINT STAR 1.3
Excerpted from a review by
Thomas J. Andrews

[NOTE:- The following is from text by T.J.Andrews:- to be on the 10/89 DOM along with PRINTSTAR, Version 1.3]. (rrs).

Print Star 1.3 is a program originally written for the purpose of printing documentation files in multiple formats, but it also works well for printing long downloaded text files and for printing newsletter pages. It requires a 48k Atari 8-bit computer, one or more disk drives, and an Epson- or Gemini 10X-compatible printer. A special section is included so that it may be customized for other dot-matrix printers.

Print Star reads text files that have records of 40 characters or less and formats them into two or three columns printed at 6, 7, 8, or 12 lines per inch, on standard 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper. A header, footer, and page number can be included on each page.

Print Star 1.3 is menu driven, and thus is easy to run. The answers to most questions are obvious, but some may require additional explanation.

Output may be sent to any device, including disk or cassette. This output is sent complete with printer commands, so it may be dumped to a printer at a later date, or even uploaded to another computer to be printed there.

PRINT STAR HISTORY:

The original Print Star was written for a 1025 printer to print DOC files from PD disks. It printed 40-column text files in two or three page columns at 6 or 8 lines to the inch. There was a header at the top of each page and a page number at the bottom.

Version 1.1 was the same as the original, with Epson-compatible printer codes. This was written for Ken Wickert of ACE of Syracuse, who was so impressed with it that he posted it on both GEnie and CompuServe. It was he who first saw the potential for using it for captured text. It was about this time that I wrote REFORMAT, which converts text into 40-column format. With this, Ken was able to print online magazines and other long text files using a minimum of paper.

Print Star 1.2 changed the two-column printout to use elite (12 cpi) print. By this time I had purchased a used Gemini 10X printer, and added a special driver for it. Version 1.2 also added the footer option.

Version 1.25 added 7 and 12 lines/inch printing in three columns, a byline, odd/even page printing, page block printing, and a custom printer driver option. By this time, I was a GEnie subscriber myself, and posted this version in the GEnie Library. It was posted in the CompuServe Library by Rick Reaser Jr.

Version 1.3 adds an option where a second file may be printed using many of the parameters of the previous one. A minor bug in the 2-column printout with a footer on an Epson was corrected, and the Gemini driver was extended to encompass the Gemini 10 as well as the 10X. The odd/even page printing menu was given another option that would automate the process of printing on both sides of the paper. A minor addition had Print Star skip over any blank lines that would come at the top of a printed column.

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The August 3rd meeting was called to order at 8:00 PM (Just barely - he actually didn't showed up untill 7:58.) by President Jim Hood. The rest of the Officers were present and working hard except Peter our mysterious Vice President who is having trouble getting a passing grade at the Vice President school. (It seems he can't pass the course on raffle cheating -- He keeps telling the instructor how it should be done.)

The rumor is that San Jose Computing is selling its store and looking for a smaller one. After Bob Woolley bought all their 8 Bit equipment they don't need as much space.

Jim Hood has finally gotten his TT to use Multi Session Photo CD's, but still having many problems with drivers etc. Rumor has it in this case, that the major problem is operator malfunction.

After a general Question and answer session 8 Bit Software Chairman Bob Scholar demonstrated this month's floppy. The main program FaderII and its pictures takes the whole back of the disk. Fader is a picture viewer that does just that fades from one picture to the next. From the rest of the disk the program QT, a first class arcade game appears excellent.

ST Software Chairman extrodinaire Glenn Fowler broke all records by having another floppy ready. That's two in a row a modern day record. Glenn gathered a mixed bag for this disk. Blitz, an 8 Bit file transfer program, System info, gives information on your ST such as type operating system, amount of ram. Type of TOS, Etc. Another interesting program is one to work up your family tree. (To show how good this program was we decided to make up a copy of the Hood family tree -- As I expected the twenty male ancestors that hood had were all hung as horse thieves , cattle rustlers or raffle cheats.)

Talking about raffles tonight's raffle prizes were many and varied. First for the ST a donated copy of MARCEL from Doug McCasland of Marcel Software tonight's guest speaker. The big prize for the 8 Bits was one of those brown bag specials. This one looked suspiciously like a 1050 drive.

Our guest speaker Doug McCasland developed MARCEL the word processor because of the sad state of other available word processors to fill the needs he had or wanted in such a program. The thought behind Marcel is to supply a program for average use yet allowing for convenience's of other high level word processors. Marcel comes with a spell checker but you must have a hard disk to properly use it. Printer drivers are supplied for most any printer combination. Marcel is fully compatible with all ST - TT and Falcon computers and with the new MultiTos.

Marcel saves its files in RFT format that allows exporting to or importing from PC or MAC word processors. Text is automatically formatted, function keys can be programmed. In short it will do most things' one would need for average use.

To close out the evening the head raffle cheat used all his usual low level underhanded tricks to make sure the good guys didn't win the raffle. Needless to say he did it to you again. First prize the copy of Marcel went to some low life friend of Hood's. I bet he had to pay plenty to have his ticket drawn first. Oh well I warned you.

Being nobody else to cheat the meeting was adjourned at 10 PM.

Jim Moran - Secretary

September 1993

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7 Main Meeting 8:00 PM	8	9	10	11
12	13 ST SIG 8:00 PM	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 Journal Deadline
26	27	28	29	30		

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General Meeting - 8:00 PM
Tuesday September 7, 1993*

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